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ABSTRACT

This document includes a research review and commentary on the role, career, and work of assistant principals; an overview of theories and concepts useful to studying the administrative career in education; and propositions regarding professional training practices and personnel policies in education. Results of a review of the research on the assistant principal from a sociological perspective indicate that the research has contributed little to increasing understanding of the social character of the school work setting, the careers of administrators, or problems associated with training and developing educational administrators. Researchers in educational administration are encouraged to draw more upon sociology theory and research, to focus their research on work contexts and day-to-day social behavior, and to employ research strategies appropriate for investigating social phenomena. Developing an applied/action research partnership is suggested as a strategy with potential for both scientifically useful research and for school improvement based upon problem-centered inquiry. Propositions are listed to provide understanding of the administrative career and to increase the potency of the socialization and on-the-job performance of principals and assistant principals, with the conclusion that fundamental changes in professional preservice training programs and career socialization processes must occur. (DCS)

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SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS: THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

by

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Introduction

This paper has three purposes. First, to examine research on the assistant principal and to comment on that literature as it informs one's understanding of sociological aspects of the role and school work context, and associated aspects of the administrative career. Second, to identify concepts in the basic literature on organizational careers and socialization processes which illuminate specific characteristics of the administrative career in education. Third, to offer propositions regarding professional training practices and personnel policies in education, particularly those bearing on the role of the assistant principal.

Research on the Assistant Principal

Two major sources were used to identify literature on the assistant principal. A total of 294 citations were located in a computer search of Dissertation Abstracts International and the Educational Resources Information Center. Among the citations identified in the ERIC search, only 23 of the 124 were informed by theory. Among those twenty-three only five appeared to contribute useful knowledge regarding the role, career, and work of assistant principals: Reed and Conners' (1982) field study of the vice principalship in urban high schools examined the interplay between aspects of the school environment, organizational characteristics, and the role relationships and work activities of the vice principal; Ortiz's (1980) examination of socialization processes

affecting public school administrators included a focus upon the vice principalship as an entry-level position, and applied the concepts of "or ization tional space" (Katz and Kahn, 1966 and Ortiz, 1972) and "op tunity" (Kanter, 1977) to an analysis of factors mediating the transition from teaching to administrative work; Cresswell (1975) portrayed the vice-principalship as a "stepping-stone" position that eventually results in attainment of the school superintendency for a few, and stymies the advancement of women and minorities; Austin and Brown's (1970) national study surveyed over 1000 assistant principals regarding 59 administrative tasks, observed 18 assistant principals for a period of one week, and collected career mobility data from a large and geopraphically representative group of former assistant principals (N=419); and, in a partial replication of the Austin and Brown study, Croft and Morton (1977) investigated relationships between job satisfaction and the career stability of assistant principals. The research by Austin and Brown is by far the most comprehensive and useful as a basic guide to understanding the vice-principalship. The results of that study are summarized later in this paper.

Among the 170 sources identified in Dissertation Abstracts International, only 96 focused directly on the role of the assistant principal. However, more than two-thirds of those studies were normative surveys regarding the status, duties, and functions of assistant principals, with the majority of the remainder addressing a variety of phenomena including individual traits and attitudes, selection practices, and relationships among variables associated with role satisfaction, effectiveness, and organizational climate.

Among the six studies which appeared most useful to this writer, four were guided by an organizational career or socialization framework, and two examined organizational values and work activities: Bell (1980) examined the career paths of 45 high school principals, finding that the most common career path in urban districts involved moving from teaching to the assistant principalship and then the principalship, and in rural districts, moving directly from teaching to the principalship, with both career patterns characterized by a strong in-state and in-district orientation; Sandorff (1980) examined the promotional paths of eleven women, finding that their promotional socialization was similar to that reported by Valverde (1980), and that successful aspirants experienced an intensified socialization period which resulted in a personal acceptance of the evolving career orientation, giving the work role parity with the "female" role, becoming goal as well as process oriented, accepting sponsorships, developing a commitment to the administrative perspective, and accepting oneself in the new status as a superior; Petty (1981) examined career selection and shifts among present and former principals and assistant principals to determine the personality characteristics of changers and non-changers, finding some differences among school administrators, owners, and managers; Loomis (1981) reported a case study of his personal experiences as an assistant high school principal, and described the strategies employed and difficulties encountered in a role conception oriented toward instruction; Mc Donald (1981) observed five urban high school assistant principals, finding the heaviest activity sphere associated directly or indirectly with subordinates within the school building; Shapiro (1980) examined organizational values through a content analysis of teacher

evaluation reports in a merit pay district, finding that principals tended to give lower increment awards than did assistant principals, and that maintenance claims were more frequent than a other organizational function areas (claims relating to productivity mprised only 10% of all the claims made).

While there are other studies of the assistant principal and of the career and organizational socialization of educational administrators (Blood, 1966; Everhart, 1970; Greenfield, 1973; Chafetz, 1975; Griffiths, 1965; Marshall, 1979; Valverde, 1980; Mascaro, 1973; Gaertner, 1980; Carlson, 1964 & 1972; Wolcott, 1973; Newman, 1976; Goly, 1973; Pitts, 1974; Havens, 1978; & Preston, 1973), the eleven studies mentioned previously are illustrative of what has and has not been studied. Among published and unpublished studies, the vast majority are either prescriptive exhortations or atheoretical normative surveys of duties and functions associated with the role. With few exceptions, the literature on the vice principalship is not cumulative, is not empirical or informed by theory, and contributes little to increasing the field's knowledge about the role or work of the assistant principal, the administrative career in education, or the social dynamics of working in and administering schools. Although this review is not as comprehensive or systematic as the study conducted by Bridges (1982), the literature on the assistant principal warrants similar criticisms.

From a sociological perspective, research on the assistant principal has contributed little to increasing one's understanding of the social character of the school work setting, the internal and external careers of administrators, or the related problems associated with training and developing educational administrators. Most of the

research has been normative, asking assistant principals and others to share perceptions regarding various duties, functions and responsibilities. Student discipline and the associated activities of monitoring and maintaining order are invariably given high priority by respondents, the studies for the most part are status reports, and few are designed to reveal potentially instructive differences or similarities in perceptions among various groups of respondents. While several studies did examine variables such as consideration, initiating structure, climate, and satisfaction, they were not aimed at developing theory nor were they designed such that the results might be instructive regarding some dimension of the role or behavior of the assistant principal.

The most informative studies focused on some aspect of the career and organizational socialization of the assistant principal. While these studies were limited in scope and, with one exception, examined only a small number of subjects within a limited time-frame, they were illuminative of the social dynamics of being and/or becoming an assistant principal. The results identify some of the social process and context variables associated with the socialization of assistant principals, and there is a heuristic quality to these studies that is not associated with the majority of others.

The most useful study was conducted more than a decade ago by Austin and Brown (1970). Aspects of that study illustrate substantive dimensions of the role, the social dynamics associated with administering schools, and elements of the administrative career that warrant further study. These are briefly noted below.

Austin & Brown: A Summary

The Austin and Brown project consisted of three sub-studies; a normative study, a career s· dy, and a shadow study. The normative study collected responses to four basic questions about 59 administrative tasks from 1,207 high school principals and 1,127 assistant principals in seven regions of the country, and included schools representing six different enrollment classifications ranging from 500-750 to 2500 plus. Analysis of the normative questionnaire found: 1) that the assistant principal is involved in almost everything; 2) that as groups, principals and assistant principals are equally diverse in their viewpoints regarding responsibilities, importance of duties and the discretion required in performance of duties; 3) there is a great deal of variation across schools regarding the responsibility, importance, and discretion associated with all 59 task areas; 4) the assistant principal is rarely assigned "full" responsibility for executing the duties in the 59 task areas; 5) work having to do with community relations and student activities was viewed as less important than work in the other four categories of tasks; 6) most principals believed that most assignments given to the assistant do not allow for or permit high-level discretionary behavior; and 7) principals more so than assistant principals have positive perceptions of the importance of the role of the assistant principal (1970:46-47)

The shadow study involved one-week observations of 18 assistant principals and yielded a number of interesting and tentative generalizations. Job descriptions were found to be practically non-existent; the work of assistant principals was in some cases decided upon by the principal as he/she sized up the assistant's capabilities

and potential,and in other cases what the assistant principal did appeared to evolve out of the total school situation. In both instances, the work of the assistant did not seem to vary systematically with either school size or formal structure. Those observed spent most of their time in the "front office" and in the corridors; most of their work involved face-to-face interaction with students and teachers, and the primary mode of communication was "in person" rather than by telephone or memo; most contacts with others were originated by the assistant, followed by teachers and then students; the "event" initiated by the assistant was usually the result of some early "happening" in which the assistant was not initially involved; in about 50% of the matters that were addressed by the assistant, he/she was observed to have taken "final" action upon them.

The results of observations in the shadow study were for the most part corroborated by interviews with students, teachers, and other staff. However, students and teachers seemed to attach much greater importance to the assistant's place in the overall scheme of things than did either the assistant or the principal. While a tentative conclusion, Austin and Brown indicated that the assistant principal was "pretty much the person who actually kept things going" (p.23). They concluded their report of the shadow study results with the following observation from an interviewee:

> In essence, the assistant principal held things together; he was the man who was the operational leader on an hour-to-hour basis . . Beneath all the trivia there is an important fact lurking -- the assistant principal is the man who makes the school go. He is the one who plugs the gaps wherever they are and sees that things get done. The principal is the figurehead who can communicate upward. The assistant principal is the link with the outside. He is, incidentally, the link to the principal for most teachers. (p.23).

While the results of the shadow study are limited in their generalizability, the observations do provide helpful insights into the social order and day-to-day school operations. Given recent conceptions of schools as variably tightly and loosely coupled systems, direct observation of the work of the assistant principal promises to provide new understandings of schools as organizations. Such studies might reveal ways in which different organizational conditions are managed, how superiors influence subordinates under such conditions(or vice versa), and the impact of organizational structures and processes on the work of assistant principals and others. With the exception of the results of a work activity study by McDonald (1981), and the observational study by Reed and Connors (1982), relatively little is known about the conditions, substance, and impact of the work of the assistant principal. Direct observation is a virtually untapped avenue for studying the assistant principal role and the associated organizational conditions and activities. While there are limitations to this method, data collected through direct observation over an extended period of time by an experienced and informed observer can yield rich data about the social dynamics of the vice-principal's role and of the processes of administering schools that cannot be obtained by other methods. There is no substitute for thick description when the objective is basic understanding of social processes and the attendant contextual and structural variables mediating such phenomena.

The third phase of the Austin and Brown project was a career study of the occupational mobility of assistant principals based on a sample of 419 former assistant principals; analysis revealed that a majority of assistant principals do not stay with the job for an extended period of

time. Although career socialization theory was not as well developed at the time of the study as it is at present, the investigators did rely upon theory as one guide to the study. Drawing upon Super's (1957) framework the researchers examined the pattern of entry and departure across urban, suburban, and non-SMSA (Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area) districts. Three patterns were identified as noteworthy: 56% of the urban respondents reported a late entry (11 or more years experience before the first assistant principalship) and an average departure (4 to 10 years as an assistant principal before moving to a position of greater responsibility). The characteristics of the early entry/early departure group revealed that all were men, 80% were 44 or younger in 1967, two-thirds had doctorates or at least 45 hours of study beyond the master's level, and that there was a relative lack of mobility between urban, suburban, and exurban career tracks (p.62). Somewhat more often than others, the rapidly mobile assistant principals reported "they thought educational administration would provide them with opportunities to use special abilities and aptitudes, to be creative, and to exercise leadership. And they were somewhat less likely than others to stress the significance of salary, status and prestige, security, and a pleasant working schedule" (p. 62). The investigators indicate that salary, a "foot in the door" of administration, and the desire for a chance to exert leadership provided the impetus for seeking the position. While only one-fourth of the men intended to make the assistant principalship a career position, half of the women reported their intention to be career assistant principals.[1]

Austin and Brown offer two rather interesting prescriptive notes at the conclusion of their report. Within the school, they question the

efficacy of the predominance of the paired duty of student attendance and discipline and its accompanying negative tone, and speculate that a more profitable approach would be to assign the assistant with a continuing task of analysis regarding the identification and promulgation of aspects of the school experience that increase the school's "holding power" (Wax, 1967) for students. Additionally, they argue for the "planned, rational, just, and professional" (p. 68) identification, recruitment, and selection of potential candidates rather than relying only upon sheer chance or the principal's power to choose; they faulted the existing personnel system as highly restrictive and inflexible, and they questioned the value of service as an assistant principal as preparation for subsequent leadership roles.

While administrative tasks and their relative importance have probably changed somewhat in the past 20 years, the basic issues of (1) what assistant principals do, (2) under what conditions, and (3) with what impact, remain to be examined in depth. Further study of these and other ideas initially explored by Austin and Brown promise the possibility of a systematic and useful body of knowledge informing the field's understanding of the administrative role and career in education.

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[1]Somewhat contradictory results are reported in a more recent study by Croft and Morton (1977) which built upon the Austin and Brown study in researching the relationship between perceived job satisfaction and career stability of assistant principals in an urban and a rural sample. This investigation reported that, "there is a significant relationship between job satisfaction and career stability, as well as considerably greater satisfaction and perceived career stability than in the Austin and Brown study."

Career Socialization: Theoretical Concepts

The organizational problem of successfully matching people to roles, or from the individual's viewpoint finding a role that "suits" one, are enduring struggles for organizations and their participants. Understanding the processes of organizational socialization, its form and content, successes and failures, can tell one a great deal about what is important to the organization, how the organization sustains itself, accommodates newcomers and, generally, how the organization behaves as a social organism. Understanding the nature and consequences of individual responses to socialization can illuminate important problems of adaptation and accommodation, satisfaction, and performance effectiveness on the part of individuals, and can reveal related career development and productivity issues of importance to both the individual and the organization. The ideas described next provide a brief overview of selected theories and concepts that can be useful guides to studying the administrative career in education.

Socialization & Individual Responses

The most common meaning associated with the idea of career is that it entails some orderly job progression over the span of one's life that entails remunerative work in one or several interrelated positions associated with an occupation or profession. The literature on careers is broad and is concerned with a range of interrelated dimensions including career choice, career mobility, career development, career stages, career outcomes, career management, the internal and external career, identity formation, adaptability, attitudinal change, career

commitment, the management of careers, career satisfaction, and a host of associated process, mediating, and career effectiveness issues.

Organizational socialization refers to "the process by which one is taught and learns "the ropes" of a particular organizational role" (Van Maanan and Schein, 1979: 211). It is a process concerned with the manner in which one acquires the attitudes, perspectives, and behaviors needed to work satisfactorily within particular organizational settings. It is a process that usually begins before one actually assumes a prospective organizational role or position ("anticipatory socialization", Merton, 1957: 319) and continues in varying degrees throughout one's career. It is a process that may be deliberate, or it may occur very informally without conscious intention or awareness by either the socialization agent or the persons affected (Brim and Wheeler, 1966).

Organizational socialization processes have two primary foci: moral socialization objectives and technical socialization objectives. Moral socialization is concerned with acquisition and internalization of group norms, values, and attitudes. Technical socialization is concerned with the acquisition and appropriate use of the knowledge, skills, and associated technical behaviors needed in a particular role or position.

Responses to organizational socialization take at least three forms: custodianship, content innovation, and role innovation (Van Maanan and Schein, 1979). Custodianship involves accepting the status quo and assuming a custodial or a caretaker response to the responsibilities, mission and activities associated with the role. Content innovation involves reform or some effort to substantially improve or change the strategies, activities, or practices of the role.

In this case the stated expectations or traditional norms associated with the role are accepted for the most part, but the newcomer seeks to apply new ideas, knowledge, and strategies with the aim of making the role more effective or different. A third socialization response, referred to as role innovation, goes beyond content innovation and reflects an effort by the newcomer to "redefine the ends to which the role functions" (Van Maanan and Schein, 1979). Socialization responses will hereafter be referred to as custodial responses, which involve accepting the role as it exists, or as innovative responses, which involve some effort by the newcomer to change the role as given.

Temporal Dimensions of Careers

Career stages have been conceptualized in a variety of ways in the literature. The basic framework outlined below reflects the stages an individual is hypothesized to progress through as an organizational member pursuing a career in one organization; i.e. it does not capture the issues of a career across multiple organizations nor does it reflect the possibility of multiple careers for one individual.

Schein (1971) postulates six basic stages and statuses or positions associated with each stage. (See Figure 1) While persons often have more than one organizational career, Schein's illustration of a single organizational career implies progression through various stages over time. The basic conception may be simplified by referring to the pre-entry, early, middle, late, and retirement stages of a career, with attendant problems and role transition points within and between various stages. In the literature on the careers of educational administrators,

most of the research has focused on the pre-entry and entry stages; the early, middle, late, and retirement stages have been virtually ignored.

The focus of inquiry regarding the entry and pre-entry stages of administrative careers has emphasized the content and processes of individual learning and has not directly focused on describing organizational socialization tactics or strategies per se; the emphasis has been upon describing the behaviors and the associated role-learnings (knowledge, values, and skills) of candidates and, to a certain extent the incumbents themselves (assistant principals and principals). Although understanding the individual's perspective is useful, more attention needs to be given to describing the organizational tactics, contexts, and conditions associated with socializing the individual.

For example, from the organization's perspective, how are recruits identified and processed (Baltzell & Dentler, 1983)? What are the socialization tactics employed and for what organizational purposes are they employed; with what success? What are the organizational conditions which mediate individual responses, and are different organizational conditions associated with different individual strategies and responses? The point here is that while some data are available regarding what the aspirant does and learns in the process of moving from teaching to administration, relatively little is known about organizational strategies and conditions that influence what the aspirant does or learns before and after initial role entry, and there has been very little study of the post-entry stages, particularly the middle and later stages of the career. (see Bridges, 1965; Mascaro, 1973; and McCabe, 1972)

Figure 1

Basic Stages and Transitions		Statuses or Positions
1.	Pre-entry	Aspirant, applicant, rushee
	Entry	Entrant, Postulant, Recruit
2.	Basic Training novitiate	Trainee, novice, pledge
	Initiation (first vows)	Initiate, Graduate
3.	First Regular Assignment	New Member
	Substages:	
	3a. Learning the job 3b. Maximum performance 3c. Becoming obsolete 3d. Learning new skills, etc.	
	Promotion or leveling off	
4.	Second Assignment Substages	Legitimate Member (Fully accepted)
5.	Granting of Tenure	Permanent Member
	Termination and exit	Old-timer, senior citizen
6.	Post-exit	Alumnus emeritus, Retired

(Adapted from Schein, 1971 in Careers in Organizations by Douglass T. Hall, Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc., 1976)

Careers and Organizational Contexts

Stage theory is one set of ideas that inform the study of careers. Another important set focuses upon the organizational settings in which careers unfold; the segments and boundaries associated with movement within and between various domains of the organization. Van Maanan and Schein (1979) differentiate three organizational dimensions that present different socialization problems; functional domains, hierarchical domains, and inclusionary domains. This is a relatively simple model of organizational properties but is useful because of its generalizability across a wide variety of organizations. The functional domain refers to the way the organization clusters the various tasks performed by organizational members. Functional domains within education are not as clearly distinguished as in many other types of organizations, and this is particularly true at the school level. Functions at the school level typically include the activities of instruction, staff personnel, student personnel, financial and physical resources, and community relations, and at the district level functions may include tasks associated with school operations, pupil personnel, staff personnel, school business affairs, research and development, and a variety of housekeeping functions such as transportation, food service, and maintenance.

While district and school size influence the degree of functional differentiation that may occur at these two levels, there are nevertheless functional clusters of tasks that need to be performed (as hazy and as over-lapped as they might sometimes be). The distinctiveness and clarity of the boundaries between functions will vary across schools and districts, and these variations can be expected

to have an impact on the socialization, career development, and work performance of organizational participants. For example, in settings where there are fuzzy distinctions or a great deal of overlap among functions (functionally-differentiated tasks being performed by the same person), one would anticipate that socialization processes, transitions, and outcomes would be different (perhaps more diffuse or less potent) than in settings where functional boundaries are more clearly differentiated.

Hierarchical domains refer to the distribution of rank and responsibility within the organization (Van Maanan and Schein, 1979). Some organizations are very decentralized and have few hierarchical distinctions, while others (the military, for example) have many levels of rank and supervisory authority. At the school site, again depending on size and level of education, there may be two hierarchical domains (as in a small elementary school) or more (as in a large comprehensive high school, which may have as many as five levels of rank). School organizations tend to have relatively flat structures, and this can present a number of difficulties for the person seeking to be upwardly mobile over the course of one's career; in reality, one has to leave teaching in order to assume higher levels of responsibility beyond that of department head. The adoption of the "career ladder" concept by school organizations, for example, can be expected to present new individual and organizational opportunities and problems related to socialization and career development.

Inclusionary domains concern the social fabric and interpersonal dimension of becoming a more "central" member of the positive reference group (Van Maanan and Schein, 1979). This can be thought of as a radial

dimension where-in one must acquire and demonstrate appropriate conformance to social rules, norms, and values in order to move from peripheral to central group membership. Being "included", being "on the inside", means essentially that one has crossed some inclusionary boundaries and has demonstrated one's worth and loyalty to the extent that central members of the group are willing to confide secrets, talk openly about "how things really work", etc. Successfully passing inclusionary boundaries means that individuals usually share the same assumptions, attitudes, and values ("perspectives" in Becker's (1961) terms) as central members of the group. Research on the administrative career has focused on these problems to some extent (Blood, 1966 & Greenfield, 1977).

The structure of the organization has an impact on socialization tactics and outcomes, and variations in functional, hierarchical, and inclusionary domains can be expected to present different problems and consequences for both the individual and the organization. Other features of the organizational setting, "organizational space" (Katz and Kahn, 1966 and Ortiz, 1972 and 1982), role visibility and access to members of the positive reference group (Merton, 1968; Blood, 1966; and Greenfield, 1977), and the looseness or tightness of the "couplings" between elements and processes within the setting (Weick, 1976 and 1983; Clark, 1983; and Meyer and Rowan, 1978) can be expected to mediate socialization processes and outcomes, and to have an impact on the work and career(s) of educational administrators.

Role Socialization Processes

The ideas presented thus far call attention to socialization processes, responses by individuals, career stages, boundary passages, and organizational setting variations that mediate organizational socialization and career development processes and outcomes for individuals. The following disscussion summarizes concepts developed by Brim and Wheeler (1966) regarding adult socialization processes that have been applied by Van Maanan and Schein (1979) to developing a theory of career socialization. Their framework includes six process dimensions:

1. Collective versus individual socialization processes
2. Formal versus informal socialization processes
3. Sequential versus random socialization processes
4. Fixed versus variable socialization processes
5. Serial versus disjunctive socialization processes
6. Investiture versus divestiture socialization processes

(1979: 232)

The importance of these variables lies in the different socialization outcomes for individuals that are associated with different process conditions and combinations. Some are hypothesized to lead toward the development of innovative responses; others, to the development of custodial responses.

Collective socialization involves movement as a group through a boundary passage or related socialization experience. Individual socialization refers to processing people individually and in a relatively or completely isolated fashion. The dominant mode in educational administration is to process candidates individually, although some large-city districts do have internship and training programs that reflect a collective orientation. The difference in part is one of shared versus idiosyncratic experiences.

Formal socialization processes segregate the recruit from other organizational members and make that person's "rookie" status known to the recruit and to others. Informal socialization processes often do not specify the recruit's role and there is little or no effort made to differentiate the recruit from other organizational members; the latter mode (informal) characterizes the typical situation in educational administration, at least during the pre-entry socialization period.

Sequential socialization refers to the extent to which a specific series of steps is required in order to reach a target role. Random socialization refers to a process that is highly ambiguous, unknown, or frequently changing. Educational administration appears to be characterized by random processes early-on, with more sequential processes occurring at later stages of the career as the individual seeks administrative roles roles of greater responsibility.

Fixed socialization processes are characterized by a clear time-table associated with the completion of a given passage. Variable processes are characterized by little information as to when a passage will be completed or "how much" or "how long" is enough. Educational administration is highly variable in this regard once recruits have accumulated the specified initial length of service as a teacher (this typically ranges from 1-5 years). Some persons may complete a boundary passage within a few years, while others may take much longer or may never complete the passage from teaching to administration.

Serial socialization is a process whereby current members of the organization act as role-models and may actively "groom" recruits for assuming similar kinds of positions. Disjunctive socialization refers to processes in which no current role-models exist to inform or

otherwise influence the recruit as to how to proceed. The case in educational administration, particularly at the school level (the assistant principal and principal roles), is a serial socialization process.

Investiture processes confirm the appropriateness and worth of the recruit and his/her capabilities, knowledge, attitudes, and orientations; "we like you as you are". Divestiture socialization processes seek to change personal characteristics, to sever old associations and values; to re-orient the recruit and alter the view the recruit holds of oneself and others. The situation in educational administration is typically characterized by a gradual divestiture process that is quite informal and may take years to unfold. (The preceeding definitions closely parallel the discussion by Van Maanan and Schein 1979: 232-253).

Variations in the processes defined above are presumed to result in different socialization responses. Van Maanan and Schein (1979) hypothesize that " a custodial response will be most likely to result from a socialization process which is 1) sequential, 2) variable, 3) serial and 4) involves divestiture processes" (p. 253). Content innovation "is most likely to occur through a socialization process which is 1) collective, 2) formal, 3) random, 4) fixed, and 5) disjunctive" (p.253). The role innovation response is most likely to occur "when the socialization process is 1) individual, 2) informal, 3) random, 4) disjunctive, and 5) involves investiture processes" (p. 254).

Role Socialization of the Assistant Principal

The socialization processes characterizing the transition from teaching to administration are hypothesized to be characterized as 1) individual, 2) informal, 3) random, 4) variable, 5) serial, and 6) as involving divestiture processes. The individual mode gives the socialization agent(s) maximum potential to influence the recruit, and the outcomes may be innovative or custodial depending on other conditions. That the process is informal creates a "trial and error" condition for the recruit and makes it more difficult for the recruit to know what is valued and for the organization to influence what is to be learned. The recruit may thus inadvertently respond to inappropriate role-models or may become oriented in a direction that will not be viewed as appropriate by those who control boundary passages. The randomness of the steps and events associated with boundary passage make it difficult for the recruit to get on "the right track" or to anticipate the efficacy of various strategies or interim steps, and make it difficult for the organization to influence prospective assistant principals in the early pre-entry phases of the career. Thus, from the organization's viewpoint, candidates with potentially valuable qualities related to changing missions or needs may inadvertantly self-select a series of steps that move them further away from rather than toward the assistant principal role. This characteristic combined with the variable time-frame(s) associated with boundary passages (between 4 and 15 years in the Austin and Brown study) makes it hard for the candidate to know where he/she stands, keeps the person "in the dark" regarding his or her progress, and is likely to increase the candidate's anxiety. Van Maanan and Schein suggest the anxiety produced by the variable time condition

increases the likelihood of conformity toward influentials and thus produces a custodial response (p. 246).

The serial character of the process increases the power of the organization to influence the development of newcomers, and to foster continuity in the organization as assistant principals are "groomed" and "moved up". Serial socialization is most likely to produce a custodial response. Divestiture processes increase the likelihood of candidates' developing a custodial orientation and provide the organization with powerful ways to mold and control the values of new members. Divestiture processes regarding movement toward the assistant principal role appear to be gradual and subtle. As the candidate begins to do some of the organizational scut-work (that which many teachers may refuse to do) associated with monitoring children, helping to "set up" for parent and other meetings, being a "go-for" and helping out the administrator with an endless stream of minor (and sometimes major) projects, the "teacher" self is gradually shed and the "administrator" self evolves; the development of administrative perspective is associated with these conditions (Blood, 1966; Greenfield, 1973; and Mascaro, 1973).

The socialization processes influencing those who aspire to the assistant principal role thus appear most likely to yield a custodial response; the conditions associated with the socialization of school principals appears to be similar. While research regarding the socialization of the assistant principal and the school principal has not been guided by the preceeding ideas, the results to date suggest that the scenario described above probably is valid to a large degree. Although intervening variables and processes may alter this scenario, particularly the impact of sponsorship (Miller, 1973), the development

of mentors, and various legislated selection and recruitment policies, it is anticipated that research regarding the socialization process variables discussed above will confirm the proposed set of conditions and emergence of the attendant custodial response.

Research Foci & Methods in Educational Administration

The theoretical literature on careers and organizational socialization is broad and evolving. Research on the administrative career and organizational socialization processes in education has been sporadic, tends to focus most extensively on a few process and outcome variables at the early stage of the career, reflects the individual candidate's or administrator's perceptions and experiences as the vantage point for study, and is not particularly concerned with theoretical or policy issues per se. While the studies that have been conducted do begin to illuminate the salience of the social dynamics of school organizations, this occurs more as an ancillary (often unorganized) spin-off than as the result of design or intention by the researcher.

There have been virtually no studies of the social dynamics of exercising power and authority in schools, nor has there been any systematic study of what might be termed the sociology of school-work, or the micro-politics of education as they unfold at the school site level. There are a number of basic questions that might be explored: What are the social processes involved in administering schools? What are the variations in school settings, structures, and career/role socialization processes? What relations obtain between setting

variables and patterns of socialization processes, and individual responses, orientations, behaviors, and performance outcomes?

The emergent perspectives in organizational theory that call attention to the variable strengths in coupling between and among organizational elements, the increasing attention being given to organizational cultures, language in organizations, and the focus on the organization as a unit composed of smaller social units such as individuals, subgroups, and coalitions (Pfeffer, 1982) are the theoretical underpinnings that can stimulate research grounded in examinations of the day-to-day behavior, social relationships, attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and interactions of school participants. Research in educational administration, with some notable exceptions (Waller, 1932; Cusick, 1973 & 1983; Lortie, 1975; and Wolcott, 1973), has not focused on "the little stuff of everyday life in schools." This failure to examine the social dynamics of everyday organizational life in schools has resulted in a major and critical gap in the knowledge base of educational administration as a field of study.

The dual benefits of adopting a sociological perspective in studying school organizations and educational administrators include 1) the generation of knowledge and theory contributing to the development of sociology as a basic field of inquiry aimed at increasing one's understanding of the human condition, and 2) the development of context and role specific knowledge that can expand one's understanding of schools as work settings and school administrators as key actors in the school organization. The broader literature focusing on the sociology of work and occupations, containing within it the ideas and problems of career development and organizational socialization

phenomena, offers many points of departure for the researcher interested in the sociology of teaching, administering, and learning in school settings.

While the preceeding discussion of career socialization processes was stimulated by what this writer perceived as the most useful focus characterizing research on the role of the assistant principal, there are numerous other concepts and problems that could profitably be explored from a sociological perspective. Sociology is a broad field encompassing many sub-fields of study. The perspective in this paper reflects the sub-field of the sociology of occupations and professions, and encompasses or overlaps with other sub-fields like social stratification and social mobility, industrial sociology and the structure of work organizations, and the sociology of complex organizations and organizational behavior. From a sociology of occupations and professions perspective (Pavalko, 1971), traditional lines of inquiry include the following:

1. The professionalization process and the associated problems of professional marginality; the focus here is the degree to which education and its various sub-fields reflect the characteristics of professions on the occupation-profession continuum, and the changes in the meaning and organization of work activities.
2. The process of occupational choice and the variables associated with choosing and learning occupational roles and norms. Why do some persons choose education (or educational administration) and others do not?
3. The processes and consequences of occupational socialization and identification. Much of the more useful research on the assistant

principal role has reflected this perspective, though this work tends to be limited by its focus on boundary passages during the early years; the training period. Neglected areas include problems of the plateaued worker and transitions and adjustments at the middle and later stages of the career.

4. Study of career mobility and the various individual, organizational, and environmental contingencies associated with frustrated and successful efforts to be horizontally and vertically mobile.
5. Study of the work setting and the ways in which work settings and contexts influence individuals; the varieties of work settings and the similarities and differences across contexts; the nature of the work itself and its impact on teachers and administrators; the social relations and interactions at work; satisfaction and alienation of the worker; the impact of technology on people and conditions of work; ideologies and cultural dimensions of the work place and the occupation or sub-specialty.
6. Study of the relationship between work, self-development, and other non-work aspects of one's life; leisure, the meaning of retirement, and general life style. While phenomena associated with this line of inquiry are increasing, particularly with the emergence of the sub-fields of career and adult development, such studies are rare in education (Greenfield, 1983; Blase, 1980; Beam, 1981; and Derr 1980.)

The basic lines of inquiry associated with the sociology of occupations and professions offer one point of departure for researchers interested in the organizational work lives of educators. Other useful vantage points for inquiry include the quality of work life (Dubin,

1976), the dynamics of groups at work (Thelen, 1954), the sources and uses of social power (Pfeffer, 1981), the sociology of practical reasoning in organizational life (Turner, 1974), and the sociology of interaction (Goffman, 1961).

Social behavior is the fundamental element in school organization and in the administration of schools. Researchers in education have emphasized study of the antecedants and consequences of social behavior in the work place (the studies of organizational climate, organizational size and structure, and leader behavior, for example), but the methods and the targets of inquiry associated with most of the research in educational administration have not focused on the day-to-day social behavior of school participants in situ.

The research tradition in educational administration is somewhat analogous to the approach taken by the person who wants to understand the difference between a gourmet chef and a good cook and proceeds by sampling and distinguishing among the various finished products those persons create. The point is not that one is unable to distinguish the difference between the appearance and the taste of the dishes served, but rather that being able to differentiate those qualities and manifest differences tells one very little, perhaps nothing at all, about the fundamental differences in the cooking or baking processes themselves. The ingredients may be very similar, but the processes by which they are put together often make critical differences in the outcome. In educational administration we know something about manifest appearances and differences in administrative and organizational characteristics and outcomes, but very little about the social processes underlying those phenomena.

Studying Assistant Principals and Principals at Work

Understandings and descriptions that meet the dual criteria of 1) being grounded in the everyday social reality of school life and 2) being informed by and contributing to the development of social theory are fundamental to advancing the knowledge base in educational administration. Grounded theory regarding the work of the assistant principal and other actors in the school setting are the necessary prerequisites to developing and testing useful hypotheses about administrative work, social processes in administration, the relation of setting to process variables and the like.

Social behavior can be studied in a variety of ways, ranging from close-up observation over extended periods of time to large-scale surveys that are cross-sectional in design. Direct observation is probably the most profitable source of basic descriptive explanations of social behavior, although it has the disadvantages of costs in personnel time, fewer available researchers skilled in collecting and analyzing such data, and a higher risk associated with producing something useful from a policy or scientific perspective. While these conditions exist it is nevertheless important to employ such strategies if one expects to develop substantive descriptions and explanations of what occurs at the individual or sub-unit level of organizational behavior.

Emergent theories of organization reflect a concomitant emergence of research paradigms reflective of the phenomena being studied. These organizational concepts appear to more closely reflect the actual logic-in-use by organizational participants. As these ideas continue to evolve, and as researchers begin to test these ideas and to use them as

a guide to inquiry, there will of necessity be a concomitant emergence of what some have labeled the "softer" traditions of inquiry; direct observation, depth-interviewing, and the associated field research strategies of ethnography and related modes of inquiry using what might grossly be referred to as qualitative methods.

One research strategy that has not received much attention in educational administration, and which lends itself quite well both to the social phenomena to be studied and to the conditions under which they must be studied, is action research. The roots of action research are deep, and while the ends of action research have not always been science, this need not be the case. Applied research, and educational administration <u>is</u> an applied field of study and practice, has as its primary goal the systematic collection of information designed to solve applied problems. Within this tradition, action research is often viewed as more partisan in orientation, with the aims of this particular strategy being actions, training, and decision-making intended to bring about social change. Action research can be an effective strategy for accomplishing organizational change in schools, although most school administrators are not equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively employ such an approach to school improvement.

Developing effective partnerships with school administrators and teachers has been difficult for those in universities, particularly when the primary goal of the university professor in seeking the partnership is access to school settings for research purposes--research that often produces little of benefit to the teachers and administrators in the partnership. The view of school people generally is that the research

being done too often has little or no practical utility regarding the problems they face on a daily basis.

A strategy that could result in a more effective partnership and in research that has both scientific and practical value, is to develop the capability and interest of administrators and teachers in action research at the local school site that is targeted to immediate problems of an applied nature. Now, while traditional scholars do not view action research as "real" research in a scientific sense, and it is not often scientific, there is no reason not to encourage such inquiry on the part of educators--who are concerned with action, training, decision-making, and social change. Encouraging such research is likely to lead to better informed and more effective actions and decisions than no research at all, and it is unlikely that even the most staunch scientific research traditionalist would argue against such consequences. The benefit to scientific researchers of encouraging and developing the capabilities of school practitioners to do problem-centered action research of immediate practical value, is that it can provide the applied scientist with access to settings of interest and can build credibility and legitimacy for the related but different kind of research that is of interest to scholars in educational administration.

Developing a partnership that involves skilled applied researchers working in liaison with school practitioners to develop the capabilities of teachers and administrators to engage in action research, to guide them regarding the collection and interpretation of data, and to advise them of the results of existing research studies or social theories related to the particular problem being addressed, has potential for all

parties involved and could do much to help bridge the chasm that currently exists between the work of researchers and practitioners in education.

From the perspective of the applied researcher serving in such an advisory capacity, the benefits to such a contribution include long-term access to settings for social research that is scientific. A fundamental limitation at present with research aimed at describing and explaining social behavior in schools, or the role of the assistant principal for example, is that it often only permits a cross-sectional glimpse of phenomena. The reality is that the activities, behaviors, values, and attitudes of school participants, such as those of the assistant principal, unfold over time; events and actions have antecedents and consequences that cannot be understood clearly in a week or two of observation, or through a series of interviews or observations.

To summarize, the preceeding perspective encourages researchers in educational administration to draw more extensively upon the available theory and research in sociology, to focus their research on the work contexts and day-to-day social behavior of school participants, and to employ research strategies appropriate for investigating social phenomena. The related problems of obtaining long-term access to school settings and bridging the chasm between action and research on administrative and school problems were briefly discussed, and the potential of developing an applied/action research partnership was suggested as a strategy having potential for both scientifically useful research and for school improvement based upon problem-centered inquiry by teachers and administrators.

Career/Role Socialization and Personnel Policy Issues: Concluding Propositions

Recruitment, selection, training, and career and professional development practices in education have not been systematically studied and do not appear to be well articulated in practice. The comments which follow are speculative and impressionistic and are offered as a series of propositions intended to stimulate discussion and study.

1. The long-term informal and serial character of the process of professional socialization associated with the role of principal and assistant principal results in the development of a custodial orientation on the part of newcomers to those roles. The prospects for content or role innovation under these conditions of personnel development are bleak, and candidates with initially laudable intentions to improve the quality of schools and the effectiveness of instruction often find their intentions frustrated and, if they persist in their career aspirations may well find themselves caught up in enacting the role in a manner inconsistent with and directly in conflict with their initial motivations and aspirations.
2. Practices of recruitment and selection of personnel for the roles of principal and assistant principal are haphazard and not informed by any coherent policy of human resource development and utilization. Most positions, wittingly or unwittingly, are filled by self-selected candidates from within the local district, and such practices increase the likelihood of appointing candidates with a custodial role orientation.
3. Training and development of principals and assistant principals at both the pre-service and in-service levels proceeds in a haphazard

and almost random manner thereby exacerbating potential efforts by a school or district to match individual qualifications to particular job requirements, or to develop personnel already holding the position. Professional training is often not responsive to the social realities of the position and there are few training and development options for the mid-career administrator. Pre-service training proceeds on a self-selected part-time basis that diminishes the potency of the training experience. Internship or pre-role practice opportunities that may exist are usually part-time, unsalaried positions that reflect no a'priori design or set of objectives. Powerful informal socialization processes in the work setting are very likely to "wash out" the technical knowledge and skills obtained through part-time study in graduate school.

4. The problems of obsolescence that plague every occupation have not been systematically addressed in education(particularly among administrators), and the propensity of assistant principals and principals to assume a custodial role orientation that perpetuates the status quo carries with it the practice of retaining essentially ill-equipped teachers and administrators. The plateaued and frustrated worker and the teacher or administrator whose knowledge and skills have failed to keep pace with a changing situation need not be ignored; evidence about the capacity of adults to learn and change is abundant, and career redirection or professional development counseling that has been helpful in other occupations could be fruitfully applied in education. Productivity in education is dependent on human resources and, as in any

endeavor, the quality of the available resources has a major impact on both the production process as well as the end product. Assistant principals or principals who are performing poorly or are otherwise ill-equipped for the role need to be developed or counseled and directed to careers or positions for which they might be more suited.

5. Educational administration is an applied field of study and research that is incidental (if related at all) to the problems of practice will fail to influence practice or otherwise advance the knowledge base in educational administration in a meaningful way. Research on organizational arrangements and administrative and teaching practices related to instruction, learning, and student behavior is emerging in the field of administration (Erickson, 1977 and Duckworth, 1983), and to the extent that this trend continues a knowledge base will be developed that can be drawn upon by educational administrators as they proceed to formulate policies and manage schools. Research needs to focus on the characteristics of schools as organized work settings and on the day-to-day social behaviors and activities of school participants.

6. Increasing the capacity for research at the local school site will result in more effective school operations and more applied research in the field of educational administration. Problem-centered action research at the local school site is directly related to school improvement. University liaison personnel with an applied research orientation and the opportunity for long-term research associations in the field will increase the development of an applied knowledge base in educational

administration and can be a viral resource to on-going action research efforts by teachers and administrators.

7. With regard to the role socialization and careers of assistant principals and principals:

   a. Completion of a full-time professional training program cooperatively developed by school administrators and university faculty will foster the development of a local, state, or regional pool of qualified applicants for selection as administrative training interns.

   b. Formalizing and providing support for a full-time administrative internship at the school or district level will foster the possibility of a planned and well structured post-graduate pre-service training experience.

   c. Publically announcing positions and actively searching for qualified applicants from outside as well as from within the school district will increase the pool of qualified applicants for those positions.

   d. Creating planned career development institutes and associated retraining opportunities for the plateaued and the mid-career administrator will reduce obsolescence and increase opportunities for career shifts and vertical or horizontal mobility.

   e. Providing incentives for early entry and for continuing education and career development will increase the available talent pool, and will reduce both the probability of obsolescence and the emergence of

custodial responses to organizational socialization processes.

f. Redesigning the role of the assistant principal to increase the level and scope of responsibility for the tasks of identifying, analyzing, and solving instructional and social problems will be positively associated with the instructional effectiveness of school programs, the holding power of school programs and activities for children, and incumbent satisfaction and productivity in the role.

g. Redesigning the role of the principal to increase the scope and level of responsibility for the tasks of identifying, implementing and managing effective educational programs, for developing and evaluating personnel and programs on a regular basis, and for providing leadership in identifying and solving problems of organizational and educational significance will be positively related to the emergence of an administrative perspective among assistant principals and that is oriented toward school improvement and responsive organizational adaptations rather than toward maintenance of the organizational and educational status quo.

These propositions rest on the basic assumption that people are the school, and the extent to which we identify and develop people as the basic educational and organizational resource is directly related to increasing the capacity of schools and school administrators to be effective. The general process of administrator training and

development that evolved during the first half of this century is no longer adequate. The challenges of excellence in education today and the increasing rate of social, economic, and technological change contribute to a school situation that is becoming increasingly difficult to manage and lead effectively.

The existing system of pre and inservice education for assistant principals and principals emphasizes their moral socialization (which will always be necessary), but does so in a manner that has the effect of diminishing the potency of technical socialization objectives that are part of their formal training. While effective moral socialization is a necessary precondition for membership in the administrative reference group, it alone is not sufficient for effective performance regarding the technical requirements of the role. Distinguishing more clearly between the technical and moral socialization processes, and developing alternative and more potent technical socialization processes is one means by which the administrative talent needed in education can be developed (Greenfield, 1984).

While the emergence of principals' centers and academies is to be lauded as having great potential for increasing the profession's capacity for continuing education and career development in the short-term, more fundamental changes in professional pre-service training programs and career socialization processes must occur if the long-range challenges are to be met. The general ideas suggested above in the form of propositions offer a point of departure for researchers and policy makers interested in understanding critical aspects of the administrative career and in increasing the potency of the socialization and on-the-job performance of principals and assistant principals.

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